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ABSTRACT

This study investigated curriculum media centers (CMCs), i.e., centers that provide print and non-print materials, equipment, and support services to faculty and students in teacher education programs. Questionnaires were sent to CMC coordinators/directors and college executives at 103 selected institutions that prepare elementary, middle, and secondary school teacher candidates in 19 states representing the membership of the North Central Association (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming). The findings of this study are based on an 81% rate of response from the CMC college executives and 79% from coordinators. Objectives of the survey were to: (1) provide information to administrators for planning and managing CMCs; (2) obtain data on CMC staff, services, facilities, and collections; (3) determine strategies for developing instructional media support via the CMC in the implementation of teacher education programs; (4) examine the effect of National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards on CMCs; and (5) develop a media management model to improve planning and integration of CMCs in teacher education programs. Data reported include a descriptive profile of CMCs, information on preservice and inservice teacher education classes scheduled in the CMC, and perceptions of barriers to change in CMCs. Implications for CMC planning are presented. (7 references) (MES)

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Title:

The Nature, Function and Value of the Curriculum Materials Center on Colleges of Education

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THE NATURE, FUNCTION AND VALUE OF THE CURRICULUM MATERIALS CENTER IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Background

The curriculum material center (CMC) is an area typically located in a college of education building. Such a center usually provides a full range of printed and non-printed materials, equipment, and delivery of support services to faculty, students, and teacher education programs in a college of education.

The primary mission of the CMCs involves many processes in respect to what students and teachers do with materials evaluation, synthesis, reflection thinking, appreciation, and assembling of materials (Ward & Beacon, 1973, p. 31). Albright (1989) pointed out that an additional mission of a curriculum material center is "to help college faculty members improve their teaching." In addition, they need help in such activities as "course planning, discussion, diagnosing student misunderstandings of course content, writing tests, and course evaluation" (p. 41). The CMC is valuable to teacher education programs as they function to select, house, and make available new materials. According to Vlcek & Wilman (1989), the basic purpose of curriculum material centers is "to develop teaching/learning strategies, programs, and materials that facilitate learning of training performance" (p. 11). The personnel serving in the CMCs ought to provide professional directions and guidance to center clients. Curriculum material center personnel ought to be trained to keep apace with advancement of the modern technology. Teacher education institutions must support their CMCs "so that the quality of their service will enhance the over all teacher education programs" (Ellis, 1969, pp. 31).

Curriculum material centers exist to facilitate and improve learning by supporting classroom instruction as well as supporting services to student teachers, staff, faculty, and the community. The curriculum materials center ought to be an organization that is charged with the responsibility of facilitating the continuing development of professional and personal competencies of faculty, particularly those that lead to the improvement of teaching and learning (Albright, 1983; Gaff, 1975).

The Statement of the Problem

There are justified demands for current information concerning organizational structure, management processes, funding, and perceptions related to the relation of CMC's as it functions and value in the preparation of teacher education programs. This study attempted to identify the relationship between the existence of the CMC's and

the effects of accreditation and standards upon CMC's, and the factor which represents the greatest barrier to the efficient and effective integration of the CMC's into the respective teacher education programs. This study is limited to 103 colleges of education in selected institutions in nineteen (19) states representing the membership of the North Central Association (NCA). They are Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

This study compared and analyzed the perceptions of the CMC coordinator/directors and the administrator/dean regarding the functions and value of the CMC's in the context of the present and the future. The study was designed to produce a profile of curriculum material centers and their relation to the organization of colleges of education and the respective teacher education programs. The thrust of the study was 1) to determine the purpose of the centers, 2) to determine the impact of these centers upon the teacher education programs within the colleges, 3) to identify patterns or profiles of the organization and management of the centers, and 4) to determine whether the CMCs are maintained because of political tradition, i.e., to meet the requirements of external agents such as NCATE, or are these units necessary to the effective preparation of future classroom teachers at the teacher training level. The basis of these four concerns were set within a view of perceptions of the present context versus future status of the CMC's in the colleges participating in the study.

Significance of the Study

It was anticipated that the results of the research would provide current insight as well as extensive information into the nature and the "status quo" of CMC's, as well as probable futures for such centers. This study would: 1) provide pertinent information to educational administrators for use in planning and managing more efficient and effective CMC's, in an administrative component of colleges of education in the present and the future; 2) obtain data regarding staff, media services, facilities, the scope of print, non-print and equipment collections in the present and future context; 3) determine strategies for developing instructional media support via the CMC as a primary and integrated factor in the implementation of teacher education programs; and 4) provide a profile of the effects of NCATE, as those standards relate to the continued acceptance and existence of CMC's within colleges of education; 5) the development of a media management model which should promote a more efficient and effective planning process and integration of CMC's in teacher education programs, including pre-service and in-service.

The results of the study is significant in that it brings together a number of administrative and organizational structures that were found in the CMC's from which

the data were obtained. These patterns could be used for the justification of CMC's status of staff and personnel, facilities and services, and the selections of material holdings, equipment, and administrative control, for the present as well as the future.

Design of the Study

Thirteen hypothesis were developed from four research questions. In addition, hypotheses were formulated to determine whether the justification for the curriculum materials centers was to meet accreditation requirements or to facilitate and improve K-12 teacher preparation. There were no ready-made questionnaires suitable for this study. As a result, the instrument used for this research was self-designed questionnaire.

A 27-item questionnaire for the CMC coordinators/directors and a 15-item questionnaire for the college executives was developed. Comparison of mean scores, t-scores and pearson correlation coefficients treatments were used for the analysis of the data.

After considering various methodologies which could be used to meet the study objectives, the survey technique was selected for use in this study. The survey technique was employed to gather data concerning the current and future status of the CMC. Two types of instruments were employed; descriptive methodology and a Likert scale format. The descriptive survey technique was employed to gather data concerning the existing status of the CMC's. The Likert scale format was selected for the survey instrument because it is reliable and can be suitable to people with a particular attitude. The items of the questionnaire were rated on a scale of one to five(1- 5), with designations such as "strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, to strongly agree."

Population and Sample

The universities and colleges considered for this study were selected institutions which prepare elementary, middle and secondary school teacher candidates in 19 states representing the membership of the North Central Association. All together, 103 institutions were selected. The target population of this study consisted of four groups: the CMC coordinator, the college executive of large colleges with an enrollment of 10,000 or more, and smaller colleges with an enrollment between 3,000 to 9,999. The population was composed of 206 participants, 103 CMC coordinators and 103 college executives. The findings of this study were based upon 81 percent rate of responses from the CMC's college executives and 79 percent from coordinators.

Analysis of Data

After the data was collected, all items were prepared and arranged for examination. The t-test treatment was used to compute the difference between the two means (Norusis, 1987, stated that such an analysis is appropriate for such data).

While Pearson's correlation coefficient was chosen due to the equal interval nature of the data, Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1979) stated that Linear regression analysis was appropriate for such data. In addition, descriptive statistics were presented due to the nominal nature of the responses. Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1979) stated that such an analysis is appropriate for such data). SPSS-X for IBM/CMS, at the University of Toledo was used to analyze the data.

The Results of the Study

Hypotheses were formulated to determine whether the justification for curriculum materials centers (CMC) was to meet accreditation requirements or to facilitate and improve k-12 teacher preparation. The results revealed that college executives differ in their perceptions in regards to the standards and requirements of NCATE. However, as the results of this study demonstrated, the college executives very strongly believed that CMC's exists in response to the pressure to meet the needs of pre-service teacher preparation programs. On the other hand, CMC coordinators very strongly believed that CMC's exist to meet the standards and requirements of NCATE.

Further, the college executives and the coordinators differ in their perceptions in regards to the instructional support and budget. The college executives suggest that the CMCs were not provided with adequate funding to carry out their mission in the present. However, the college executives predicted that the CMC of the future will be provided with appropriate funding and instructional support to carry out the mission of this support center. The college executives predicated that the CMC of the future will be provided with appropriate funding and instructional support to carry out the mission of this support center. The coordinators, on the other hand, were pessimistic about funding and instructional support in the present and the future. However, the data indicated the CMC coordinators of the smaller institutions were presently doing well in respect to instructional support. Lastly, both college executives and CMC coordinators agreed that the CMC should be evaluated in terms of the center's impact upon the success of the respective teacher education programs in the colleges of education, as opposed to traditional library circulation evaluation models.

The descriptive profiles of the CMCs in both small and large institutions of higher education produced the following information highlights:

1. The lines of authority were controlled by the college of education.
2. The staff and personnel in the curriculum center ranged from one or two professional staff members, and from one to two support staff personnel. The number part-time student assistants ranged from 8 to 10.
3. Generally, the materials and equipment collection of the CMC was purchased by the college of education.

4. Curriculum materials centers were budgeted as part of the college of education or department of education.
5. A clear majority of the management operations in the large institutions were generally computerized, while fewer management operations in smaller institutions were computerized.
6. A high majority of the large institutions provided *pre-service* teacher education classes/workshops on a regularly scheduled basis in the curriculum material center. Yet, only a small portion the above services were provided to the *in-service* teachers. However, a clear majority of the smaller institutions provided the noted services to both *pre-service* teachers and *in-service* teachers (see Table 1 &2).
7. Statistically, the major clients of the CMC were undergraduate students in teacher education. The other identified clients were graduate students and faculty in the college of education.
8. The following services were provided to the clients of the CMC: production of inexpensive classroom instructional materials, video (facilities/equipment, microteaching and previewing); computers (microcomputers) for client use; and at a lower level, photographic services.
9. Curriculum material centers maintained standard collections of traditional A-V equipment, textbooks (K-12), periodicals (K-12), periodicals (teacher education), and curriculum guides (K-12).

TABLE 1

Pre-service Teacher Education Classes/Workshops
Regularly Scheduled in the Center

	Small Institutions Percent	Large Institutions Percent	All Institutions Percent
Are *Pre-service* teacher education Classes/workshops regularly scheduled and held in the CMC using the facilities, equipment and services of the Center.			
Yes	63.6	80.4	73.4
No	36.4	19.6	26.6

TABLE 2

In-service Teacher Education Classes/Workshops
Regularly Scheduled in the Center

	Small Institutions Percent	Large Institutions Percent	All Institutions Percent
Are *In-service* teacher education Classes/workshops regularly scheduled and held in the CMC using the facilities, equipment and services of the Center.			
Yes	54.5	39.1	45.6
No	45.5	58.7	53.2
No Response	0.0	1.0	1.3

In determining the significant barriers to change facing institutional planners related to the future of CMCs, the study found positive correlation between college executives and coordinators. Table one lists the perceptions of the college executives and CMC coordinators as related to the factors representing the greatest barriers. The ranking order of the barriers were as follows (1 = the greatest barrier and 9 = the least difficult barrier). Clearly, the most difficult problem for CMCs in the future is to obtain and retain administrative support to continue their existence.

TABLE 3

The mean Perceptions of the College Executives and CMC Coordinators as
Related to the Factors Representing the Greatest Barrier.

Factors With the Greatest Barrier	Rank
Space	3
Qualified staff (Professional and Support)	5
Leadership by Coordinator/Director	8
Acceptance by students	9
Institutional Administrative Support	1
Faculty involvement	2
Organizational structure	6
Impact of new technologies of instruction	7
Adoption of new technologies of instruction	4
Pearson Correlation Coefficient = .63	

Implications

Curriculum materials center directors must collect better data to identify and present the CMC needs to institutional decision makers. Given the current view of the future trends for curriculum material centers, the following implications are presented:

- The primary concern is the lack of communication between the college executive and the curriculum material center coordinators. Regular meetings between deans and CMC directors must take place to promote better communication and change. In addition, the appointment of curriculum material center directors to deans' administrative decision-making groups may improve communications and institutional planning.
- The management plans and operational services of the CMC should be reviewed by an advisory committee which ought to include faculty representatives from each of the respective teacher education areas. When such a representative group helps establish priorities, it makes it possible for the curriculum material center coordinator to plan and implement suggestions originating from within the programs of the department or the college.
- It appears to be reasonable and necessary that colleges of education ought to provide pre-service and in-service teachers a wide range of training experiences and to introduce them to the use of all types of instructional materials and new technologies of instruction.
- As curriculum material centers grow and accommodate more pre-service and in-service teachers as well as faculty of the college of education, it will become increasingly more difficult to justify needs, establish policy, budget, and manage staff without goals, objectives and criteria by which to measure or evaluate the performance of this organizational unit. Rationally, it seems that what is needed is for CMCs to move from traditional circulation based evaluation to models which are more programmatically based.
- Given the perceived barriers to change, deans and directors must work together on strategic planning in order to guarantee the integration of the curriculum material center into the future of the college.
- In comparing the descriptive profiles reviewed in Teclehaimanot (1990) and Ellis (1969), the following factors remain a problem for the curriculum material center:
    a. the organizational structure of curriculum material centers has not changed to reflect the needs of modern institutions of higher education.
    b. modern CMCs have been highly affected by new technologies of instruction.
    c. aspects of the management of current curriculum material centers are being computerized at various levels of sophistication.
    d. adequate funding and institutional support remains a major problem for CMCs.
    e. the leaders of curriculum materials center in the 1990s must be pro-active and seek the funds to purchase equipment and materials rather than relying upon

donations by producers and publishers.

The major findings of current research strongly suggest that the curriculum material center coordinators and the college executives (deans or designers) need to collaborate, plan and clarify their respective values related to the CMC and NCATE standards. Further, different perceptions regarding the nature and function of curriculum material centers continue to exist.

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